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Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples

Report of the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples**

(covering its work during 1998)

Rapporteur: Mr. Fayssal **Mekdad** (Syrian Arab Republic)

Chapter XI

Tokelau

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* A/53/150.

** The present document contains chapter XI of the Special Committee's report to the General Assembly. The general introductory chapter will be issued under the symbol A/53/23 (Part I). Other chapters of the report will be issued under the symbol A/53/23 (Parts II-VI and VIII-IX). The complete report will be issued subsequently as *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-third Session, Supplement No. 23* (A/53/23).

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A. Consideration by the Special Committee

1. At its 1484th meeting, on 6 February 1997, the Special Committee decided, *inter alia*, to take up the question of Tokelau as a separate item and to consider it at its plenary meetings (see A/AC.109/L.1871).

2. The Special Committee considered the question of Tokelau as a separate item at its 1494th and 1495th meetings, on 8 and 10 July 1998, respectively.

3. During its consideration of the question, the Special Committee had before it a working paper prepared by the Secretariat containing information on developments concerning the Territory (see A/AC.109/2116).

4. At the 1494th meeting, on 8 July 1998, with the consent of the Special Committee, Ulu-o-Tokelau made a statement (see A/AC.109/SR.1494). Statements were also made by the representatives of Papua New Guinea and Antigua and Barbuda (see A/AC.109/SR.1494).

5. At the same meeting, the representative of New Zealand, the administering Power, made a statement (see A/AC.109/SR.1494).

6. At the 1495th meeting, on 10 July 1998, the representative of Papua New Guinea introduced draft resolution A/AC.109/L.1875/Rev.1.

7. At the same meeting, following a statement made by the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic, the Special Committee adopted draft resolution A/AC.109/L.1875/Rev.1 without a vote (A/AC.109/2124).

8. At the same meeting, the representative of New Zealand, the administering Power, made a statement (see A/AC.109/SR.1495).

B. Recommendation of the Special Committee

9. In accordance with decisions taken at its 1484th and 1495th meetings, on 6 February and 10 July 1998, respectively, the Special Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft resolution:

Question of Tokelau

The General Assembly,

Having considered the question of Tokelau,

Having examined the chapter of the report of the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples relating to the question of Tokelau,[1]

Recalling the solemn declaration on the future status of Tokelau, delivered by the Ulu-o-Tokelau (the highest authority on Tokelau) on 30 July 1994, that an act of self-determination in Tokelau is now under active consideration, together with the Constitution of a self-governing Tokelau, and that the present preference of Tokelau is for a status of free association with New Zealand,

Recalling also its resolution 1514 (XV) of 14 December 1960, containing the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, and all resolutions and decisions of the United Nations relating to those Territories, including, in particular, Assembly resolution 52/77 of 10 December 1997,

Recalling further the emphasis placed in the solemn declaration on the terms of Tokelau's intended free association relationship with New Zealand, including the expectation that the form of help which Tokelau could continue to expect from New Zealand in promoting the well-being of its people, besides its external interests, would be clearly established in the framework of that relationship,

Noting with appreciation the continuing exemplary cooperation of New Zealand as the administering Power with regard to the work of the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples relating to Tokelau and its readiness to permit access by United Nations visiting missions to the Territory,

Noting also with appreciation the collaborative contribution to the development of Tokelau by New Zealand and the specialized agencies and other organizations of the United Nations system, in particular the United Nations Development Programme and the International Telecommunication Union,

Recalling the dispatch in 1994 of a United Nations visiting mission to Tokelau,

Noting that, as a small island Territory, Tokelau exemplifies the situation of most remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories,

Noting also that, as a case study pointing to successful decolonization, Tokelau has wider significance for the United Nations as it seeks to complete its work in decolonization,

1. *Notes* that Tokelau remains firmly committed to the development of self-government and to an act of self-determination that would result in Tokelau assuming a status in accordance with the options on future status for Non-Self-Governing Territories contained in principle VI of the annex to General Assembly resolution 1541 (XV) of 15 December 1960;

2. *Also notes* Tokelau's desire to move at its own pace towards an act of self-determination;

3. *Commends* Tokelau's ongoing work in charting a distinctive constitutional course, reflecting its unique traditions and environment;

4. *Also commends* Tokelau for current initiatives and endeavours, based on wide consultation with its people, to construct a true "house of Tokelau", acknowledging the role of the village as the foundation of Tokelau, as well as the need to continue the process of strengthening the basis of national self-government;

5. *Acknowledges* the attention being given to broader matters of governance, including Tokelau's efforts to establish clear local channels of responsibility and accountability in national and village government;

6. *Notes* the desire of Tokelau, in consultation with the Government of New Zealand, to take over responsibility for the Tokelau Public Service and the willingness of the New Zealand Government to make the necessary legislative changes, reflecting its already well-advanced policy of devolving that part of government which deals with the interests of all of Tokelau;

7. *Acknowledges* Tokelau's need for reassurance, given that local resources cannot adequately cover the material side of self-determination, and the ongoing responsibility of Tokelau's external partners to assist Tokelau in balancing its desire to be self-reliant to the greatest extent possible with its need for external assistance;

8. *Welcomes* the assurances of the Government of New Zealand that it will meet its obligations to the United Nations with respect to Tokelau and abide by the freely expressed wishes of the people of Tokelau with regard to their future status;

9. *Invites* the administering Power and United Nations agencies to continue their assistance to the social and economic development of Tokelau;

10. *Requests* the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples to continue to examine this question and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its fifty-fourth session.

Notes

[1] The present chapter.